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hobby, to have written the book to advocate some peculiar view of his own in order to set the rest of the world right. We do, indeed, fall upon a passage now and then which seems to be open to question. In insisting that Christ by his Spirit is specially with his people since the day of Pentecost he is certainly right, but in making this presence the promised *parousia* (p. 18) he is as certainly unscriptural. Every use of the word in the New Testament is against his view. In laying such emphasis on the abiding presence and work of the Spirit in men of all times as to say: "The Bible might be destroyed [by 'destructive criticism'], but the incorruptible seed of the word within it would live on in human hearts," etc. (p. 74), he is at least liable to mislead, as he is in making the prophets of this day coördinate with the prophets of the Bible. His explanation of successful prayer for the conversion of men as being examples of "telepathy" (pp. 162, 163) will not command universal assent as yet. But it is ungracious to call attention to such points when the work as a whole is so rich in manifold truth. The style of the book is good—clear, simple, epigrammatic, and anti-theistic, at times unduly so, but on the whole admirable. It is a valuable addition to the literature of the subject.

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THE PROVIDENTIAL ORDER OF THE WORLD. "The Gifford Lectures," 1896-97. By ALEXANDER BALMAIN BRUCE, D.D., Professor of Apologetics and New Testament Exegesis in the Free Church College, Glasgow. New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1897. Pp. 346, 8vo. \$2.

THE principal aim of the author is twofold: to justify the theistic conception of the world, and to vindicate a providential order in the evolution of nature and history. Waiving traditional arguments for the existence of God, Dr. Bruce, agreeably to the "requirement" of Lord Gifford's lectureship, adheres in pursuing his purpose to strengthen belief in a divine order of the world to the "scientific method." That requirement, however, does not mean "that one must prove the being of God as you prove a proposition in Euclid;" and he adds categorically: "The thing cannot be done, and, if it could, it would not be worth doing" (p. 4). What is to be said "about God is to rest on observation of the world we live in, of nature, of man, of human history." "Through man to God must be the line of proof for us" (p. 9). Or, as expressed elsewhere: "Man, the crown of creation, the key to

its meaning and to the nature of the Creator, is the basis of our whole inquiry" (p. 323). The authority of Scripture is distinguished from the witness of Scripture; the former being by the scientific method excluded, but not the latter. The author, however, affirms that "the authority which rests on the power of the teaching of Christ," contrasted with "the religious literature of mankind, is after all that which carries most weight."

Of the providential order of the world Dr. Bruce does not attempt a formal definition. The general theme embraces thoughts such as these: God cares for men; he sustains such a relation to man as makes that care natural and credible; his care covers all human interests, especially ethical interests; he overcomes evil with good, ruling over all things with a view to a kingdom of the good (p. 6).

Assuming the validity of the evolutionary theory, the argument begins with man's place in the universe, and is described "in accordance with the ascertained results, or even the precarious hypotheses, of recent evolutionary science." Both the Bible and science set man at the head of creation, as the "crowning result of the process by which the known world came to be" (p. 15).

Whether man as to his intellectual and moral being, no less than as to the body, is the product of evolution is for science not a settled question. Nevertheless, in the interest of theism, the author is inclined to the idea that man is out and out the child of evolution. But "it is vital that we conceive of God as immanent in the world, and unceasingly active throughout the whole history of its genesis, the ultimate cause of all that happens" (p. 24). If God be immanent, then he is in the evolution of intellect and conscience as truly as in the development of man's physical nature, and the "ultimate cause" of every new epoch in human history (p. 41). Evolution thus becomes God's "method of communicating to man the light of reason and the sense of duty" (p. 41). The same thought is more fully taught in the closing chapter: "There is an Ultimate Cause at work within the evolutionary process, who has an aim in view, and who directs the process so that that aim shall be realized. The aim is man, and all that goes before has its reason of existence in him and its value through him" (p. 323).

Dr. Bruce concedes that for long ages "the genus *Homo*," "by reason of mental imbecility," may have been "unable to speak," and, as specialists tell us, "it took thousands of years" to say "I" and "thou," yet he maintains that there is "a great gulf separating man, even

at the lowest point of civilization, from the most intelligent animals" (pp. 60, 147).

From the place that man, a moral being, holds as the crown of the natural world, "theistic inferences" are drawn (III). Dismissing the method of thought that sees the action of God only at noteworthy epochs, Dr. Bruce holds that we may argue from the scope and issue of the *whole* that evolution has its ground in a Being whose nature accounts for all that comes to pass. But immanent action does not exclude nor supersede his transcendence. God is active on the world no less than active in it throughout its whole history, a truth to which we have an analogy in the relation which we ourselves bear to our own bodies (p. 53).

Three principles have a wide range of application in providential action—election, solidarity, sacrifice—to each of which a final lecture is devoted, constituting the strongest and most suggestive portion of the book. Of the rich lecture on election the history of Israel, chosen for service, furnishes the type of reasoning. Solidarity presents itself under two forms, *family* and *social* solidarity, to which *personal* solidarity, identity with past self due to habit, may be added (p. 285). As to sacrifice, the vicarious suffering of the few for the many, of which the cross of Christ is the eternal symbol, is the universal law. God, being immanent, is more than a spectator of self-sacrifice; he is in it, a fellow-sufferer, a burden-bearer for his own children (p. 333). Solidarity is the fundamental fact, demanding election as its complement, and imposing sacrifice on the elect (p. 335).

Dr. Bruce recognizes the Christian idea of sin; but on the relation of sin to the history of man, or its function, if any, in the process of universal evolution, the book is silent. Is this profound disorganizing force in humanity an element of the normal order, referable to "the ultimate cause of all that happens"?

The question may be put whether, judging by the scientific method, man, as we now know his constitution, is in truth "the crown of creation"? Is the Second Man, in whom "was realized the moral and religious idea" (p. 223), who "was a Hebrew, a Greek, and a Roman all in one" (p. 276), the product, or the ultimate product, of evolution? Does the scientific method, purely applied, uninfluenced by Christianity, require or allow speculation to pause either with man or with Jesus Christ?

The entire argument is conclusive for those who believe in divine providence; but would it be for a Confucius or a Haeckel? Christian

thought may legitimately ask whether the scientific method yields such results as Dr. Bruce correctly affirms to be valid? The considerate reader cannot but feel that at all points his *Christian idea* of God, of man, and history is the background of the argument, the regulative force of the manner in which the reasoning by the evolutionary method in support of the divine order of the world proceeds.

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THE GREAT POETS AND THEIR THEOLOGY. By AUGUSTUS HOPKINS STRONG, D.D., LL.D. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society. Pp. xvii + 531. Cloth, \$2.50.

THE poets selected are Homer, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, Wordsworth, Browning, and Tennyson. The author says that there may be question which names deserve to be counted among the great poets, but that there will be no dissent from the opinion that the study of all those he has chosen is of the greatest advantage to theologians and preachers. He hopes that old truths may gain new interest and brightness from the unfamiliar setting of theological beliefs. Browning is especially commended to preachers: "He who would serve men's highest interests as secular or religious teacher will find more of suggestion, more of illustration, more of stimulus in Browning than in any modern writer." To lead preachers to the study of the poets is a great service, for the best literature is as important to them as exegesis, theology, or philosophy. The object of the essays, then, is to indicate the religious spirit and beliefs of the poets. The author does not confine himself closely to this purpose, but describes the life of his poets, discusses the nature of poetry, defines the poet as a creator, an idealizer, and a literary artist, and then, in each case, considers the religious views of the poems. The title of the book, however, is not "The Theology of the Great Poets," but "The Great Poets and their Theology." Doubtless a comprehensive view is necessary to the recognition of any single characteristic. Some of the essays read as though they were originally lectures to popular audiences, and, therefore, treated the whole subject, making special reference at the end to the theology of each poet. The book is, in fact, an introduction rather than an interpretation. It is designed to awaken interest in the best poetry and to guide in the selection of that which is finest. Those who are already familiar with the poets will be disappointed if